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SUBJECT: DARFUR: PAE WILL STOP WORK JULY 14, BUT A 45-60 DAY
TRANSITION PERIOD WILL FOLLOW

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Visiting PAE President John Moore, resident Project Director Bruce Smart, and Support Manager Claire Sanford told CDA Fernandez June 29 that PAE will stop work on all projects July 14 ("the date for no more shovels in the ground") but that UNAMID and PAE have discussed a 45- to 60-day transition period following this date to hand-over vital functions currently provided by PAE. PAE said SAF Military Intelligence approvals had slowed the transit of equipment and materials for UNAMID projects (customs and MFA approval was quickly obtained but not final approval from SAF military intelligence). On a brighter note, PAE spoke highly of the new UNAMID Deputy Director of Administrative Support Services. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) Moore told CDA Fernandez and poloffs that although work will stop all on projects July 14, the final date of PAE's contract with UNAMID, PAE and UNAMID have discussed a 45- to 60-day transition period beyond the final contract date. PAE will not do any construction projects during that time but rather will focus on hand-over of equipment and projects. Moore said PAE will be hard-pressed to complete a hand-over within that time-frame even assuming that all work on projects stops on July 14. Moore said ESCO will also be leaving as they don't like the new, stripped down conditions UNAMID offered on their contract.

¶3. (SBU) Moore said that no replacement contractor has been named to takeover the number of current PAE functions and UNAMID intend to fill the gap itself. He noted that while the UN can hire the PAE-trained local staff, there appear to be no Sudanese contractors who can undertake the complete package of services. Regarding the critical Canadian APC maintenance contract - the most difficult of PAE's functions from a mechanical perspective - Moore said he is not aware of any follow-on contract but indicated that UNAMID wishes to discuss this particular contract further with PAE (perhaps only to seek advice but Moore seemed to hint at an opening for an extension for PAE). Moore noted that food service, because of its impact on health and morale, is also a pressing issue for UNAMID. Bulk food deliveries are the easy part, but the hard part is proper preparation and service, noted Moore.

¶4. (SBU) Moore listed a number of additional challenges that UNAMID faces (until now managed by PAE) such as construction of roads during the rainy season and installation/protection of fuel and water bladders - which requires a level of experience that UN management's "thin" technical background do not possess. Moore agreed with CDA Fernandez that Chinese engineers could perhaps pick up some of responsibilities but that, once again, UNAMID has placed itself in a situation where it will be hard pressed to maintain its current level of operation much less expand quickly.

¶5. (SBU) Moore said Sudanese customs had provisionally cleared 70 PAE cargo flights (52 are currently staged in Brno in the Czech Republic and 18 in Dubai) but that Sudanese Military Intelligence and the Civil Aviation Authorities (CAA) still had not cleared the flights. He also blamed UNAMID inefficiency for some of the delay,

noting the "incompetence" of UNAMID management in getting paperwork done. On a bright note, Moore and Sandford noted that the new UNAMID Deputy Director of Integrated Support Services based in Khartoum, Peter Iskandara, has already made a positive difference in UNAMID's capacity and responsiveness. "We could have accomplished a lot more if he had arrived six months ago," said Moore.

¶16. (SBU) Comment: PAE management and employees are disappointed to be leaving Darfur "without having finished the job" and concerned that UNAMID won't be able to easily pick up the slack. In the long-term, the UN system will likely be able to adjust to the loss of PAE, but in the short-term there are likely to be significant headaches. As we told PAE in our meeting with them, the non-extension of the PAE contract has nothing to do with their performance and everything to do with the GOS' desire to punish US companies for its frustration related to US sanctions policy. Although these two issues should not be linked, the Sudanese will do whatever they can to pressure the US in this regard. The loss of PAE will also hurt the Embassy's ability to support our field office in El Fasher, especially in emergencies, and we will need to rely more on a less than trustworthy UNAMID in this regard.

FERNANDEZ